



Agenda item 9: General debate*

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* For the discussion of this item, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Plenary Meetings*, A/1145th and 1147th-1153rd meetings.

DOCUMENT A/5260

Letter dated 10 October 1962 from the representative of Costa Rica to the Secretary-General

[Original text: Spanish]
[16 October 1962]

I have been instructed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country to request you respectfully to receive this note distributed to the States Members of the United Nations.

In his address delivered to the General Assembly of the United Nations on 8 October 1962 (1145th meeting), Mr. Osvaldo Dorticós, President of Cuba, referred to the recent informal meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and special representatives of the American States in Washington, D.C., in terms that Costa Rica feels compelled to rectify, not only in order to do justice to the truth but also as a token of respect for the General Assembly.

The meeting alluded to by President Dorticós was from being a "rendezvous for conspiring and plotting internal subversion in Cuba" and expounding the foreign policy of only one of the participating countries; it was a new demonstration of American solidarity aimed at maintaining the peace of the continent and safeguarding America's democratic institutions, threatened by Soviet intervention in Cuba.

To insinuate, as did the Cuban Chief of State, that the Washington meeting was convened to further the alleged objects of one of the State members of the Organization of American States was an attempt to mislead the General Assembly and to misrepresent the

nature and aims of present relations between the countries belonging to that Organization.

The informal meeting at Washington will certainly not be the last held to discuss in a spirit of friendship and co-operation the problems affecting the Western Hemisphere. For several decades the countries of the American Continent have been earnestly striving to establish and strengthen the inter-American juridical system, in order to bring about the rule of peace and justice, promote solidarity, strengthen co-operation and defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its members. That great effort obliges all the States concerned to remain vigilant in order to save the American continent from the dangers that threaten it.

The present danger is such that the American States must be firmly resolved to strengthen their defensive system, so that the plans for subversion and Marxist-Leninist domination do not prevent our continent from continuing to live in freedom and the ordinary people from achieving full enjoyment of their social and economic rights through the application of the principles and methods of representative democracy.

(Signed) Fernando VOLIO JIMÉNEZ,
Permanent Representative of Costa Rica
to the United Nations

DOCUMENT A/5261

Letter dated 11 October 1962 from the representative of the United States of America to the Secretary-General

[Original text: English]
[16 October 1962]

During the course of the general debate at the outset of the seventeenth General Assembly session, several speakers have made untrue and distorted allegations

against the United States. These misrepresentations were repeated, even amplified in the address made on 8 October 1962 by the President of Cuba in which he

issued the challenge to a number of delegations, including my own, to respond to his allegations.

In order that these allegations may not stand unanswered, I have the honour to request that the attached statement be circulated to all Members of the United Nations as a document of the General Assembly.

The United States Government, which together with the people of the United States entertains feelings of the warmest friendship and good will for the people of Cuba, deeply regrets the various misrepresentations and allegations against the United States which were made during the course of the general debate and by the President of Cuba and regrets the necessity to correct the record by means of this statement.

(Signed) Adlai E. STEVENSON
Permanent Representative of the
United States of America
to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION

1. The charges made by President Dorticos of Cuba and by others against the United States Government are neither original nor true. Four times within the last eight months, once in the First Committee of the Assembly, once in the plenary, and twice in the Security Council, the United Nations has decisively rejected accusations similar to those we have heard today.

2. The policy of the United States is perfectly clear: The Government of the United States, like the Governments of the other independent American Republics, will honour its commitments to the United Nations Charter and to the inter-American system. The United States will not commit aggression against Cuba. But the United States will not tolerate aggression against any part of this hemisphere. The United States will exercise the right of individual and collective self-defence—a right expressly recognized in the Charter—against aggression in this hemisphere.

3. The charges made by Cuba against the United States are dictated by two factors. One is that the Castro régime has associated itself with the communist bloc in its pursuit of world domination. Another is that Cuba is suffering from its self-inflicted exclusion from the American family of nations. The Castro régime has turned its back on its history, tradition, religion and culture. Cuba has turned away from its neighbours, and it is at the mercy of the political rip-tides that sweep through the communist world with such frequency.

4. Thus, the other nations of the Americas are understandably anxious and alert. But vigilance cannot and should not be equated with intervention, nor alarm with aggression.

5. The hemisphere—and the world—were prepared to accept the original promises of the Castro Government that economic and social justice would be brought to the Cuban people. But its original pledges have now been discarded by the Cuban régime, and it has inflicted on the Cuban people violations of civil justice, drum-head executions and the suppression of political, intellectual and religious freedom. We condemn these with all the force at our command.

6. But even these excesses would not constitute a direct threat to the peace and independence of other States. However, Cuba has also been opened to a flood of Soviet weapons and "technicians", and to the Soviet Union's so-called "fishing fleet". It has not only armed

itself to a degree never before seen in any Latin American country, but it has also welcomed penetration by the foremost exponent of a doctrine condemned in this hemisphere as "alien" and "incompatible".

7. The United States cannot accept—and will never accept—that Cuba has become the spring-board for aggressive and subversive efforts to destroy the inter-American system, to overthrow the Governments of the Americas and to obstruct the peaceful, democratic evolution of this hemisphere towards social justice and economic development. The statements of the President of the United States on this subject, and the recent joint resolution of the Congress of the United States amply attest to this concern.

8. Nor have these developments been ignored by the American Republics as a whole. The Foreign Ministers and special representatives of the American States have recently concluded two days of informal discussion on communist intervention in Cuba. Speaking unanimously, they declared that the most urgent problem facing this hemisphere is this foreign intervention in Cuba and the threat to convert the island into an armed base for penetration and subversion of the democratic institutions of the hemisphere. They affirmed their will to strengthen our common security against all aggression and all situations threatening peace and security in this hemisphere. Noting the special characteristics of the inter-American regional system, they stated that a military intervention by communist Powers in Cuba cannot be justified in a situation analogous to the defensive measures adopted in other parts of the free world in order to resist Soviet imperialism.

9. The communiqué reflected the sense of increasing gravity with which the American States have witnessed a succession of developments in Cuba since the Rio de Janeiro meeting,¹ where the communist Government of Cuba was found to be incompatible with the inter-American system, and it reflected our common will to strengthen the security of the hemisphere against all aggressions from inside and outside the hemisphere, and against developments and situations capable of threatening peace and security.

10. The historic support of the members of the Organization of American States for the principles of self-determination and non-intervention are well known. These principles have been enshrined in acts of the American conferences, ante-dating by decades even the conception of the United Nations.

11. The United States has already begun to take effective measures concerning shipping and trade with Cuba, and the surveillance of traffic in arms and strategic items in keeping with the spirit of these discussions, the resolutions of the Eighth Meeting of Consultation and other inter-American instruments. The purpose of these measures is the defence of the hemisphere.

12. These measures have no offensive purpose. The President of Cuba spoke about economic strangulation and economic blockade. Neither of these terms has application to this case. The current régime in Cuba has pronounced its intention to overthrow other Governments in this hemisphere. Could any country concerned, therefore, be expected to take part in, facilitate, trade designed to boost the Cuban economy and to arm its military services? To say that self-protective actions are aggressive, or a war-like

¹ Eighth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Affairs, which was held from 22nd to 31st January 1962.

is absurd. It is the most normal, and indeed the clement way, in which we can express our strong approval of the threats and sword rattling emanating from Cuba.

As for the Cuban President's remarks about the Guantanamo Naval Base, it is clearly not the United States but the Government of Cuba whose responsible officials appear intent on provoking an incident concerning the Base at Guantanamo. Their frequent hints and warnings that the Cuban Government might reclaim the United States Naval Base, notwithstanding the legal binding international agreements which cannot be abrogated, except by the mutual consent of both parties, is familiar to all.

The idea that the Guantanamo Base is a threat to Cuba is a figment of the imaginations of the leaders of the Cuban Government and cannot be substantiated by any action or any statement by the responsible spokesmen of United States foreign policy.

The war of nerves launched against Guantanamo by Cuban leaders can have no object but to incite citizens against the United States and against the Naval Base itself. The personnel and authorities of the Base have always enjoyed the best relations with the Cuban people. They have always been, and still are, under orders to stay out of the internal affairs of Cuba.

The President of Cuba also professed that Cuba has always been willing to hold discussions with the United States to improve relations and to reduce tensions. But what he is really asking us to do is to place a seal of approval on the existence of a communist state in the Western hemisphere. The maintenance of communism in the Americas is not negotiable.

Furthermore, the problem of Cuba is not a simple problem of United States-Cuban relations. It is a collective problem for all the States of this hemisphere. If the régime is sincere in its request for negotiations, it wishes to lay its grievances before the appropriate body of the Organization of American States, the Cuban Government might start by some action calculated to gain the confidence of the inter-American system. A obvious place to begin would be the severing of its ties to the Soviet bloc.

Let no one mistake the impact of this Soviet intervention in Cuba on the hope we all share for peace. If the Soviet Union persists in the course chosen, if it continues to try to prevent the

peaceful social revolution of the Americas, it will increasingly excite the deep indignation of the people of my country and of other American States. The result will be to make the resolution of issues far more difficult in every other part of the world. A consequence of this gratuitous Soviet initiative is to postpone even further the hope for world stabilization. This point cannot be stated with sufficient gravity.

19. The tragedy of Cuba is still unfolding. How short has been the time since the two continents of the Western hemisphere acclaimed the downfall of the Batista dictatorship and hailed what promised to be a democratic and progressive revolution. How quickly that promise was replaced by a reign of terror, confiscation, and the suppression of political, intellectual and religious freedom.

20. Just as fear is the first price of oppression, it would also have been the final price, if the Cuban oppressor had not been saved from the Cuban people by the Soviet Union. How many times in history has fear of the people's wrath driven tyrants to sell their nation to more powerful tyrants? Can the Cuban electorate send the Russian forces home? Do the Cuban leaders dare face their people without these alien protectors? A country bristling with Soviet missiles and "protectors" is the answer.

21. The United States will constantly work to reassure the Cuban people that they have not been forgotten or abandoned, and will make clear to freedom-loving Cubans, both within and outside that country, that they can count on the sympathy and support of the American people in their efforts to escape the grip of Soviet domination and to recapture their own revolution.

22. The Foreign Ministers, meeting at Washington, voiced the fraternal affection of all American peoples for the people of Cuba, and fervently wished to see them embraced again in the American family of nations. The United States joins wholeheartedly in this desire.

23. If the Cuban régime wishes to establish normal friendly relations in this hemisphere, let it return to the concepts and obligations of the inter-American system and let it cease its subservience to the Soviet Union. Let it cease to be an avenue of intervention, a way which threatens the fundamental principles and the peace and security of all its neighbours with an alien doctrine. The way is clear, and the choice is Cuba's.

CHECK LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Observations and references
Letter dated 18 October 1962 from the representative of Cuba to the Secretary-General	Mimeographed
Letter dated 19 October 1962 from the representative of Cuba to the Secretary-General	Ditto
Letter dated 28 October 1962 from the representative of Cuba to the Secretary-General	Ditto